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Steven Locke
University of Wyoming

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Reflections of Native American Teacher Education on Bear Ridge

Steven Locke

University of Wyoming

This study examines an elementary teacher education certification program delivered by a state university to Native American teacher aides on the reservation. Data were collected over two semesters using a Freirean critical theory framework to analyze the data and to explicate the problematic nature of Native American education. Analysis of the data indicated that the program reproduced Euro-American cultural values, was insensitive to Native American history or values, and did little to support individual teachers. Suggestions include the need for the program to acknowledge and address the historical cultural genocide that occurred in the education of Native Americans and the cultural and political hegemony of the teacher education program. More focus needed to be placed on supporting individual participants and their academic and cultural struggles in becoming teachers.

Recruitment and retention of Native American teachers and administrators to serve as role models for Native American children is an important issue relevant to the failure of schools to adequately educate and prepare Native American children for higher education opportunities, future employment, and the skills and abilities necessary for self-determination and autonomy. The statistics speak for themselves as Native Americans remain among the least educated of all ethnic groups in the United States. They suffer a school dropout rate of just over 25 % (St. Germaine, 1995) and next to Latinos are less likely of all other ethnic and racial groups to graduate from college or high school (Pavel, 1999). Native Americans are also the least likely ethnic group to enroll in public four-year colleges and universities as only 6% earn bachelors degrees compared to nearly 23 % for Euro-Americans (Wright, 1992). The cycle of poverty and subsequent poor education is self-perpetuating as a defective education system and concomitant social expatriation leads to dismal educational outcomes and subsequent effects on health, life expectancy, employment, and income (Grant & Gillespie, 1993).

Cited among the reasons for these dismal statistics is the lack of access to educational opportunities which are compounded by cultural gaps between the mainstream Euro-American education system and Native American culture (Pavel, 1999). More specifically, educational failure has been linked to an ignorance of native culture by Euro-American school staff, low motivation compounded by racial prejudice, student isolation, low expectations of teachers, and a lack of consideration of students' home and community problems (Butterfield, 1994; Reyhner, 1989; St. Germaine, 1995). Essentially, Native American children are unable to identify with or adapt to the culture of schools that reflect the norms of middle-class European-Americans. Content taught to Native American children and assessment strategies are often irrelevant to their culture and daily lives. In addition, learning styles of Native American students conflict with Euro-centric teaching styles (Nieto, 1996; Reyhner, 1989; Swisher & Deyle 1987). Grant and Gillespie (1993) noted that important to the educational success of Native American children is a curriculum that

reflects their experiences, the training of Native Americans who understand the needs of their own culture and can act as role models for students, and the training of European-American teachers to be more sensitive to Native American culture.

The need to recruit Native American educators has led to the development of tribal colleges (Butterfield, 1994; Pavel & Colby, 1992) and the development of collaborative teacher education programs (Hyle, 1992). The *Title II Teacher Quality Partnership* developed by the Western University College of Education on the Bear Ridge Reservation¹ is one such program that recruits, trains, and certifies Native American teacher aides already working in reservation classrooms. The college offers a sequence of methods and foundation courses needed for teacher certification in elementary education on the reservation. The following study evaluated the dimensions and utility of this program through the examination of a humanities/social studies methods course that placed a cohort of Native American pre-service teachers in the classroom with a mentor teacher for a quarter of the semester. Local non-Native American pre-service teachers were allowed to enroll in the class, thus allowing the researchers to determine differences between Native Americans and non Native American students. The study focused on the needs of Native American pre-service teachers enrolled in the program and the dimensions, implications, and suggestions for delivering such a program off-campus on a Native American reservation. Results of the study have implications for public universities' development of culturally sensitive programs that attract and retain Native Americans who aspire to be classroom teachers.

A Critical Framework for Examining Native American Teacher Education

Given the importance of creating successful educational experiences for Native American children (Reyhner, 1989),

¹ All names and locations are pseudonyms.

it is crucial to recruit and retain Native American teachers who have an understanding of their own culture and language and can act as role models (Pavel, 1999). The statistical evidence cited above suggests serious problems and barriers facing Native Americans who enter and pass through teacher education programs and post secondary education programs, yet these numbers do not illuminate the political and social realities that have repressed and maintained Native Americans in the margins of mainstream culture. As a critical theorist, Paulo Freire's work with poor and marginalized groups of peasants in Brazil provides a framework for explicating the problematic nature of minority schooling, in particular the systematic failure of Native Americans to successfully participate in mainstream educational processes with any degree of autonomy.

The process of education and educational change, according to Friere (1993) and other critical theorists (Giroux, 1983; McLaren, 1999; Wink, 2000), cannot be separated from social and political realities. A critical framework includes a view of education as the production and reproduction of culture in minority schooling in terms of power relationships that maintain and perpetuate the status quo. Critical theory encourages minorities and marginalized groups to question their understandings of social, political, and economic relationships and empowers them to develop their own understandings of these relationships. Education must take into account the involvement of the individual in the structure of education and should allow for the examination of schools as social sites where a hegemonic view of culture is evident in the curriculum and is reflective of the values, history, and practices of the wider society.

In the process of examining the social and political nature of Native American teacher education, reflections of past as well as present policies that affect current practices are important in program evaluation. From the examination of this history, teacher educators can develop understandings of how decisions and policies have led to present predicaments in Native American education, particularly in the area of the impact of European American cultural values on policy. More specifically, questions regarding the relationship between disenfranchisement, cultural genocide, and assimilation and racial stereotypes and prejudices between Native Americans and the mainstream population must be explored in terms of teacher education programs on the reservation. According to Grant & Gillespie (1993), many Native Americans fail to adapt to mainstream culture in large part due to a Euro-centric curriculum that has been promoted over the recognition of Native American existence and history. Reyhner, Gabbard, & Lee (1995) noted that teacher education programs have been remiss in education teachers about the sources of negative parental attitudes toward education and the cycle of failure that is prevalent among Native American students.

Native Americans were first exposed to education as a formal institution through missionaries who were as

interested in salvation as they were in education. Church operated schools were common for even European-Americans during this era; however, schools for Native Americans emphasized the elimination of Native culture and required students to dress, speak, and act like the White man (Reyhner, 1989). As church-operated schools during the mid 19th century were replaced by locally funded and locally controlled public schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools replaced mission schools. Native American communities seldom controlled the education of their children as students were often removed from the cultural influences of their communities and homes and forced to live in boarding schools where the last vestiges of their languages and cultures were stripped from their lives. The policy of educational assimilation meant cultural genocide for Native Americans as children were forced to assimilate into the mainstream culture. These attempts at changing language and culture did little to actually assimilate or bring about equality for the various Native American cultures. Grant and Gillespie (1993) noted that formal education for Native Americans meant learning about how to serve as second-class citizens on the bottom rung of the dominant European-American mainstream cultural ladder.

The schools emphasized vocational training thus serving to perpetuate the position of Native Americans at the lower end of the socioeconomic scales. Boys received training as farm laborers and girls as domestics. Though they were indoctrinated with the values of individual land ownership few ever reached a point where they could acquire land, had the desire to do so (p. 2-3).

Native American children were forced to reject and deny their language and culture and assimilation meant total denial of their cultural heritage. In the last half-century, further attempts to assimilate Native Americans into Euro-American occurred with the passage of the 1953 Provisions of Concurrent Resolution 108 which endorsed the relocation of Native Americans into large white centers such as Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles.

Despite recent trends to promote and acknowledge Native American history and culture, the legacy of assimilation for Native Americans and denial of their current status as active participants in society remains. Curriculum and textbooks that teach Native American history and culture treat the subject as frozen in time. Even in areas of large Native American populations, Native children are routinely taught to reject their language and culture (Grant & Gillespie, 1993; Reyhner, 1989). Contemporary issues are also conspicuously absent as mainstream curriculum focuses on Native Americans living in teepees or hunting buffalo, but does not examine the culture in terms of its survival or its conflicts with the dominant culture. As late as 1991 fully two-thirds of Native Americans were schooled in institutions that promoted value

assimilation (Joseph, 1991).

Friere (1993) noted that the historical and cultural world must be approached as a created transformable reality that is constantly in the process of being shaped. Education and the act of becoming are explicitly linked to issues of social justice and emancipation. Acknowledging and understanding the historical and cultural foundations of those being educated are essential in the shaping of their educational needs. In respect to Native American education, this means empowering and training teachers who have an in-depth understanding of their communities, their history, can provide unique cultural knowledge to their students, and can serve as role models.

Methodology

The experiences and interactions of Native American pre-service teachers in an off-campus teacher education program were examined using a naturalistic research methodology (Cresswell, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Stake, 1998). The naturalistic approach allowed for a substantive understanding of the "lived reality" (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991) of prospective teachers as they passed through the program. Rather than examining merely how the program affected Native American pre-service teachers, focus was placed on their experiences in contemporary, historical, and institutional contexts. This approach assumed that an understanding of the social and political context of teacher education is essential to understanding the viability, success, and failure of such programs

Data were collected and analyzed for two semesters. A case-history interview was utilized to select a sample of informants that would provide information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 2002). Interviews with several of the more articulate Native American pre-service teachers were conducted and transcribed in addition to frequent reviews of their journals and other classroom work. Observations of their interactions in the Methods and Practicum classes were noted in a field log and later analyzed for recurring themes. These observations combined with the examination and analysis of relevant documents in the context of regular interviews with principals and mentor teachers became the means for understanding how Native American pre-service teachers experienced and made their ways through the teacher education program (Stake, 1998). During the same period of time, regular contact was established with two other Native American pre-service teachers who had left the reservation to finish the program on the main campus. These interviews and observations served to illuminate and contextualize the experiences and barriers Native American pre-service teachers face in traditional teacher education programs.

Setting

The site of the Western College's teacher education program was located on the southern edge of the Bear Ridge reservation. Surrounding the reservation are two prosperous farming and tourist communities in stark contrast to the reservation that has almost no visible economic base outside of a few hay fields, small herds of cattle and horses, and a few small bands of sheep. The living conditions and physical conditions are identical to the description that Goodman (1993) provides in her study of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma. Other than a few filling stations/convenience stores, health clinics, community centers, and the local public and private schools, the reservation with its quasi-modern, rundown single family ranch-style homes and prefabricated housing exists in an economic time-warp. Few signs of development outside of an occasional road construction project are apparent on the reservation. Recent efforts to build a casino as a means of developing revenue on the reservation have met stiff resistance from the state. The small sign that marks the southern boundary of the reservation is hardly necessary as well maintained farms and ranches give way to empty grasslands with an occasional dwelling or building.

Culturally there is also a distinct separation in attitudes between those who work and live both on and off the reservation. Non-Native American children seldom attend the reservation elementary schools where a majority of the teaching staff is Anglo-American. One Anglo-American elementary school teacher named Mary remarked that although she lived on the reservation in a house provided by the school, she sent her children to the elementary school off the reservation, because "they didn't fit in and were discriminated against." Pre-service teacher from a nearby town who also worked in a reservation school commented on the persistent drunkenness of the Native Americans and how by Monday morning most of their money had gone to buy alcohol. During the semester Euro-American public school teachers and administrators on and off the reservation frequently made remarks such as these as if such problems were endemic to Native Americans and did not exist elsewhere.

Besides tensions and a lack of connection between the communities on and off the reservation, tensions also existed between the two tribes that occupied the reservation. During the latter part of the 19th century the United States government relocated the remnants of one Native American tribe to the Bear Ridge Reservation in disregard of the cultural differences and intense animosities that existed between a tribe that historically occupied the lands. As in many instances when different Native cultures have been relocated and forced to coexist with one another, little attention has been paid to the cultural and political differences that exist. Historical animosities and cultural differences have not lessened over the last century, making cooperation difficult between the two groups in the

development of educational planning. In view of these historical differences, classes met in a health classroom at a local high school that was considered neutral ground between the two Native American cultures.

The room appeared to be normal for a health education classroom; materials lying around the room and posters on the walls indicated there was an emphasis on prevention of alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted diseases. The materials were culturally sensitive in that many of the characters depicted were Native Americans. Yet these materials, as Goodman (1993) noted of most Native American health education materials, embodied the values of white Anglo Saxon middle class values and nuclear family structures and were void of the historical, political, and social context that might explain the reasons for some of the problems Native Americans face. Though unspoken, the classroom reinforced the image of Native Americans as unable to control alcoholism and avoid teen pregnancy.

The cultural separation of students in the class was also evident in where students chose to sit during the class. Several of the Euro-American pre-service teachers from neighboring towns outside the reservation would carpool from their respective towns and would naturally sit together. Other tables were made up of students who had previously formed friendships. By contrast, all the Native Americans sat at a single table even though they could not comfortably fit around it. The students from this latter group taught at several different schools, were not from the same towns, and shared little in common outside of being Native Americans. Outside of pleasantries that were exchanged at the beginning of class, there was little interaction between the Euro-American pre-service teachers and the Native Americans. Despite the fact the cohort had been together for over a year and had taken numerous classes together the environment of a cooperative or democratic classroom had never been established. Several pre-service teachers commented that until this particular class they had never interacted with others outside their particular group.

Discussion and Reflection

In keeping with the definition and purpose of social studies education which is to promote civic competence and respect for democratic processes (Engle & Ochoa, 1988; National Council for the Social Studies, 1994), the humanities/social studies methods course was built around the principal ideas of student-centered and experiential-learning (Dewey 1916), self-reflection and the development of a collective consciousness (Friere (1993), and development of a classroom community (Bryant, 1999). These principles were implemented to acknowledge and promote respect for the cultural diversity that exists in a democracy and to connect students' lived reality with the course content. Creating realistic experiences that relied on

student knowledge meant stepping away from conveying knowledge out of the textbook and readings and requiring pre-service teachers to demonstrate behaviors that would promote the principles of democracy in their future classrooms.

Furthermore, essential to the development of a critical consciousness for living in a democratic society was the creation of the Freirean idea of self-reflection where students would examine their own knowledge as a means of making connections between their own lived conditions and being to the commonly held reality that existed in society. Linked to this idea was the importance of constructing a collective consciousness (Friere, 1993) - especially among the Native Americans - which would empower them to take control of their own history and experiences rather than being at the affect of an oppressive status quo.

Finally, it was important to develop what Bryant (1999) referred to as a classroom community, where students are encouraged to interact and work together in positive and supportive ways. From the perspective of teaching social studies, the classroom community is important to introducing teachers to the concepts of democracy, diversity, and pluralism. Toward this end, the class is engaged in democratic practices and individual differences are honored in order to promote understanding among group members that there are many way to look at the world. In addition, research-based practices that have proven effective in establishing intercultural harmony (Cotton, 1994), were implemented in. These practices included organizing students into culturally heterogeneous cooperative learning teams and assigning them tasks that required group cooperation and interdependence. The intention was to increase inter-group contact where students had equal status so they could advance individual or group goals though cross cultural interactions.

Building a classroom community was accomplished by splitting pre-service teachers into heterogeneous groups each class period with the intent to cut across economic, social, and cultural lines. Reticent Native American pre-service teachers were placed either together or in a supportive non-threatening group to avoid being overshadowed. The first assignment at the beginning of the semester required the pre-service teachers to draw, using the analogy of a tree, a concept map of what they had learned about the world from their earliest childhood memories. They had to think of their lived experiences as a tree with roots in early family experiences, beliefs, and values; the trunk as growth and development in childhood; and branches as lessons learned from school, work, travel, and new relationships. The purpose of this activity served to help pre-service teachers clarify and define their dispositions toward teaching and to analyze how their world views had developed and evolved over time. The activity also became a way for them to examine their different values and perspectives as they shared and described their

drawings in a small group. One Euro-American student commented after the class:

I never really ever talked to them (Native Americans) before. I never ... even in the other classes we had together. It was amazing what the woman had to say about her tree of life....you know her experiences, where she was coming from. I never had the slightest idea who they were or how they lived. I always had those... well you know.. those stereotypes of "those people" (Indians) over on the reservation. (Judy).

The activity did not open spontaneous cooperation among the different groups, although there did appear to be more dialogue, respect, and sharing within each group.

The book, The Keeping Quilt, (Polacco, 1988) provided another opportunity for the students to experience cooperative classroom participation and the development of a classroom community at several different levels, while at the same time reflecting upon their individual values, symbols, and personal characteristics. During the class, each student had to design a square that reflected the individual contributions each brought to the classroom through their personal interests and talents. Working collectively they developed a design, constructed a border, decided on a theme, and later pieced their squares together to form one large quilt. When the quilt was finished each student was required to reflect on their individual square as well as the group process. The stories the students told were diverse, varied, and powerful, reflecting their insights and values towards their religion, culture, and family history. One Native American pre-service teacher in the description of her square related a particularly powerful story:

The teepee and buffalo are who we are and where we came from. but we aren't like that any more. The buffalo are gone and we do not live in teepees. We live in houses like you do. My square symbolizes who we are but it also symbolizes that we have to change. We have to start living in today. We have to learn to live in this world. (Rosalie).

While the quilt served the purpose of acknowledging who the students were, analyzing their differences, and describing what each brought to the classroom as teachers, it also served to bring those differences together and demonstrate that the differences could co-exist and were not mutually exclusive. The class quilt was a way of fostering a sense of community and cooperation and stood as a class heirloom that represented and acknowledged their own special knowledge.

The completion of the first practicum provided another opportunity for the pre-service teachers to cooperate as a group and share their insights, experiences, and knowledge

of teaching. Having one of the students read the book, Knots on a Counting Rope (Martin & Archambault, 1987), served as an introduction to their own stories of their first practicum experiences that they shared in their small groups. The story recounts the life of a Navajo child who was born blind. Through the retelling of his life story and acknowledging the dark mountains that he must cross, he becomes less and less afraid of the challenges that he must face in his life. The boy gradually takes over the retelling of the tale from his grandfather and with each telling ties a knot in a rope each which symbolizes his ability to overcome his fears and face the future on his own.

For the pre-service teachers returning from their first practicum experience, the story became a powerful reminder of the challenges they faced and must overcome in the classroom. As the semester progressed and the students developed their thematic units that they were to teach during their second practicum, they returned to the counting ropes they had started and continued to share the problems, successes, and challenges that remained for them. The activity helped them construct, acknowledge, and share their own realities and knowledge of being teachers and further helped "classroom community members recognize their common interests as well as their unique differences" (Bryant, 1999, p 112).

Interestingly, attempts to bring the group together through the development of a community of learners and shared experiences did not shift the attitudes the pre-service teachers had towards one another. There was little sharing of ideas as they developed their lesson plans for their units:

In reviewing a unit on Native Americans, an Anglo-American pre-service teacher from a town off the reservation asked about the inclusion of Native American legends as a way of teaching about the culture. The class had just covered the use of legends the previous week as a way of studying about the cultural structures and belief systems of indigenous cultures. In particular, the student asked for library resources or web addresses where she might be able to find some stories and legends. The suggestion that she ask the Native Americans sitting at the next table for ideas was met with skepticism and only after a week of being unable to obtain some suggested trade books did she reluctantly asked for help from a Native American who was a student in the class. (Field notes)

The students did not see each other as potential resources for ideas and knowledge. The activities over the semester failed to build sufficient trust and classroom community to the extent where they felt comfortable relying on one another for help. Towards the end of the semester the students complained that they were tired of being moved to

other groups and requested that they be seated in their respective groups.

The exercises that promoted self-reflection, a collective consciousness, and group intercultural cooperation were often overshadowed and at times negated by the pre-service teachers' previous educational experiences and the outside influences of educational institutions where they were either working or completing their practicum experiences. In reservation schools the Native American pre-service teachers were continually exposed to a Euro-centric curriculum and instructional methods as an example for the development of their own instructional thematic units they were assigned to teach during their second practicum experience.

On the walls outside a first grade classroom was a row of little Indians that had been cut out from a stencil and glued together by the students. The females were dressed in buckskin dresses and the boys in buckskin pants and shirts. All wore a feather in their headbands. The display in the hallway depicted the jobs and attributes of "good" little Indians. (Field notes).

The classrooms where the Native American pre-service teachers had been working as aides and were assigned to complete their pre-service often replicated a Euro-centric classroom and curriculum. This included the perpetuation of traditional racial stereotypes that have been passed down through Euro-centric history texts. In a kindergarten Halloween unit developed by a Native American pre-service teacher students were going to carve a pumpkin. The lesson was void of any reference to how the pumpkin was a "New World" food collected and in some cases cultivated by Native Americans.

Instructional strategies and teaching practices, especially those related to classroom management, also became a point of contention between the Native American pre-service teachers and their Anglo-American mentors. The university program unwittingly sided with the mentors as to decisions of "best practices" in the reservation classrooms. As products of the university, the mentor teachers supported the principles, focus, and objectives of the university courses. During the practicum experience when lessons did not turn out, frustration surfaced on the part of two pre-service teachers.

"It (the lesson) didn't work out and we aren't getting any support from our mentors," two pre-service teachers complained one day in the computer lab. "Can you ask them (the mentor teachers) what they want us to do?" In a conversation with the mentors immediately following this exchange, the mentor stated they wanted the pre-service teachers to "try things out" and if it didn't

work "try something else." (Field notes)

Yet their anxiety over classroom management issues often forced the Native Americans to emulate their mentors' practices when their own practices failed. The professors and coordinators from the university unconsciously validated the practices of the mentor teachers and questioned the practices of Native American teachers. There became a focus on the one right way of classroom management.

The lack of depth to the unit lessons and the work that the Native American pre-service teachers submitted spoke to the need for one-on-one academic support that Native American students, both on and off the reservation, receive from those in charge of teacher training programs. The academic and social assumptions made of typical college students are not always appropriate for Native American and other minority students in teacher education programs (Genzuk, 1997). In the case of one pre-service teacher who had at the beginning of the semester dropped out of the program to enroll in a traditional program on the main campus off the reservation, academic support and the building of personal relationships was imperative for moving through the academic barriers. Joanna complained that when she was in the program on the reservation, the academic and emotional support from the instructors in the program was not sufficient.

I don't think that there was enough support on the reservation because the instructors were only there for a day or so each week. If you didn't meet them you would have to try and get a toll free number or try to find a way to communicate and that was kind of hard. You would end up having to wait until the next week and by then it was probably too late. They (the instructors) were always very distant and could never really grasp what we had to go through to get our work done (Joanna).

Being successful for Joanna meant developing a personal relationship with her professors and having them take a personal interest in her achievement. It was important, she noted, that she felt that she belonged and that she had individual help.

The humanities course on campus was probably the most.... It made me feel like I had a place here because (the professor) was so... I don't know how to explain it because she was like my friend or something and she is real calm about the way she teaches...If you have a problem she helps you with that (Joanna).

Joanna's insights regarding the need for mentoring and personal attention has been well documented by scholars (Genzuk, 1997; Roberts & Locke, 2001). Professors who

are flexible, willing to help, and have high expectations are important factors for successful academic achievement (Minner, 1995).

A final dimension that influenced achievement and success in the program included the affects of social and family support. Leaving the reservation for Joanna had its positive and negative sides. In one case it was an opportunity to leave behind an environment of expectations that were a barrier to success.

I want to get finished with school and at home a lot of things were like sort of oppression. Up there...back home you are put in a certain role and you can't get out of it. They don't let you out. And that's the way I was there because everything is with the family. And all the people in the classroom are part of a certain family. I didn't want to stay down. (Joanna)

While these social and family connections were sometimes a barrier, the absences of them also created a problem especially for a woman who was responsible for taking care of her family. Adjusting to a new community and attempting to juggle school work with caring for her children in a new setting created an added burden for Joanna.

My kids are wondering why we came down here. It is a lot harder for them. I think that it is probably just the surroundings. Down here you don't know anybody. You don't know what store to go to, what turn to take; you get lost. You thought that it was going to be easy but it is very difficult (Joanna)

As noted in other studies of Native American higher education programs (Minner, 1995) students who leave behind the familiarity of their families and community to attend a traditional university are faced with formidable social and academic challenges.

Conclusions and Implications

The reflections in this study are not meant to condemn the *Title II Teacher Quality Partnership* project, the program coordinators who direct the program, or those who teach in the program. Nor has this study sought to find fault or weaknesses in the reservation schools or the mentor teachers who supervise Native American pre-service teachers. The failure of the education system for Native Americans has a history that dates back to their subjugation and forced removal to the reservation. The education of Native Americans children reflects Native American teacher education. It has occurred in a Euro-American framework that, while in recent history has become sensitive to the socio-economic status of Native Americans, has done little to acknowledge or address Native American history or culture and has ignored over a century and half of cultural genocide. Native American education in many cases today

still follows a "civilization policy" that was a typical 19th century educational mentality (Gibson, 1978). Little has changed in regards to Euro-Americans understanding of Native Americans. Outside of bringing the classroom to the reservation there have been few changes in the structure and content of teacher education that would attract or retain Native Americans in the program.

The *Title II Teacher Quality Partnership* is a collaboration between a marginalized group and a dominant group with the intention of improving the quality of education and educational practices in low achievement settings. Yet the parameters of the program and standards of achievement are Euro-American. McLaren (1999) noted that "the poor and oppressed live as the detachable appendages of other people's dreams and desires. The dreams of the poor are always dreamt for them by distant others" (p.50). Similar to the health education class, as noted by Goodman (1993), the curriculum and goals of the program did not deal with the challenging issues that must be considered in developing culturally sensitive curricula. The program has ignored the history of Native American education and is not linked thoroughly enough to larger movements and dynamics of race, gender, and class and the economic, political, and cultural arenas in which Native Americans interact. As suggested by Friere (1993), the neutrality of the educational process needs to be challenged and attention paid to the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nations. What the program lacks and needs to address are fundamental and specific questions about the justice and equity in the reservation classrooms, schools, and communities.

The humanities/social studies course was an opportunity to examine perspective history (Loewen, 1995) and to interrogate historical interpretations and the economic and social structures of the Bear Ridge Reservation. Yet, in retrospect, the course, as did all the courses in the program, emulated the structures of the courses taught on the main campus. The courses in the program lacked an examination of the contemporary social, economic, and intercultural structures that work to oppress and denigrate Native Americans on the reservation. A starting place could have been an historical examination of the conflicts that exist between the cultural groups that inhabit the reservation. By not teaching the conflicts that presently exist on the reservation and between Native and Euro-American cultures, the course perpetuated the status quo by forcing Native Americans to examine their culture through a Euro-American perspective, which has worked to oppress them in the first place.

This is not to say that Euro-Americans should not be involved in the process or that the present partnership program should not be a cooperative effort between the university and tribal council. A possible model for the project could follow the Knight Scholars program in

Washington State (Whitfield & Klug, 1998) that starts with an examination of the multigenerational trauma that occurred to the Native American teacher aides in the program and their students in the reservation schools. Such issues focus on the conflicts between different Native groups who were traditional enemies and were forced to live in close contact with each other on the reservation. Other issues focus on the reservation boarding schools Native children were forced to attend where they learned that their culture was inferior to European culture. At the same time the program participants acknowledge the need to be bicultural, able to function in both their native cultures and within the Western-oriented system of the United States and that the contemporary education system holds the key to future success.

The opportunity to develop common understandings and hence a community of learners between the European-American and Native American pre-service teachers was missed by not acknowledging and teaching the conflict between the two groups. Grouping the teachers to share their insights and the development of their units was not enough of a foundation to develop a common interest. There needed to be more acknowledgement of Native Americans as viable actors and contributors to North American and state history. The lack of this acknowledgement in the program was evidenced by the pre-service teachers who, even though had grown up next to each other, remained ignorant and unaware of their cultural differences.

Lastly and equally important for teacher education programs in the recruitment and retention of Native American teachers is attention to providing focused and meaningful academic and emotional support on the reservation as well as for those who chose to leave the reservation for the main campus. On the reservation, university instructors need to bridge the gap between the Anglo-American mentor teachers and Euro-centric curriculum and between university course work and Native American culture. Off the reservation, the support and personal interest that professors and staff took in helping Joanna traverse the maze of applications, deadlines, and requirements were important to her success. Likewise support in becoming bicultural for Joanna was essential to her success. For Joanna it took leaving the reservation to see that her culture was important, yet that it was also important for her to be able to negotiate in both cultures.

As my role as a teacher I believe that there will always be the stereotypes: a stoic Indian, a drunken Indian; a wild Indian still living in a teepee and not in a house like most of us do. Where I believe I can be a person/teacher who wants to be a cultural preserver or preserve the culture of my nation, is to place that aspect in the front row. Each lesson I teach I can add a bit of our culture. Because our culture is our life; it is the key for our survival. I

plan on becoming more knowledgeable, learning from the elders and being a person who will be able to implement our cultural values to our children. I will have a dual role as cultural preserver and educational facilitator for the young people from back home (Joanna)

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